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Disarmament Commission

306th meeting

Tuesday, 30 March 2010, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Zinsou ..... (Benin)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Zimonyi (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Organization of work

The Acting Chairman: At the outset, I wish to inform delegations that the second revision of the Chair's non-paper for Working Group II has been circulated. Please note that the non-paper is the same version as that which was circulated last year.

I would now like to inform the Commission that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has successfully concluded its consultations and has endorsed two candidates for the vacant posts allocated to it. In that connection, I call on the representative of Panama.

Mr. Tejeira (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the honour of informing the Commission that the Group has endorsed Mr. Federico Perazza of Uruguay and Ms. Pía Poroli of Argentina as candidates for the two vice-chairmanships allocated to our Group for the 2010 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The Acting Chairman: I thank the representative of Panama for the nomination of Mr. Federico Perazza of Uruguay and Ms. Pía Poroli of Argentina as vice-chairs of the Commission from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Mr. Federico Perazzo of Uruguay and Ms. Pía Poroli as Vice-Chairs of the Disarmament Commission.

It was so decided.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to echo the congratulations to the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau. We also align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Rio Group.

El Salvador believes that there are some encouraging signs that we will be able to take more concrete steps in our common purpose of strengthening the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting confidence-building measures in the sphere of conventional weapons. As we are aware, the Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament held last September parallel with the general debate of the General Assembly (see S/PV.6191), generated favourable expectations among the public with regard to the possibility of moving forward in the process of nuclear arms reductions. At the same time, it gave new life towards revitalizing the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

The various verbal commitments made at that meeting by heads of State or Government of the main nuclear Powers with regard to the need for reducing the risk posed by the threat or use of nuclear weapons were received with great enthusiasm by the international

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community. Therefore, we believe that the time has come to open a new stage in our deliberations which will allow us to move towards meeting these commitments.

The Government of El Salvador is firmly committed to contribute to the efforts of the international community to eradicate the threat of nuclear weapons, both for reasons of political and moral principle and because of the imminent danger that their use would pose not only for international peace and security but also for all forms of life. In this context, although we should highlight the importance of the multilateral debate to promote the objectives of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, we also believe that there should be support and encouragement for bilateral talks, negotiations and efforts leading to the achievement of these objectives.

In this vein, we welcomed the approval of a new nuclear arms reduction treaty by the Governments of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We hope that this treaty will soon be ratified. That would be a major step forward and would encourage other countries to conclude similar negotiations. It should also be added that we are fully confident that substantive progress and, better yet, new commitments in disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation will be achieved at the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington, D.C., in April.

My delegation believes that the major nuclear Powers have a historic opportunity to demonstrate their political will for disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, not only at the Washington Summit but at all international meetings and conferences to be held this year.

We believe that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held in May is essential to consolidate that instrument. We therefore call on all countries with nuclear weapons or nuclear programmes to state their firm commitment to full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty and with the 13 practical steps agreed upon at the 2000 Review Conference, including submitting to the monitoring and verification regimes set out in the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also call on nuclear-weapon States which are not yet parties to or which have withdrawn from the Treaty to adhere to it as an expression of good faith and mutual and collective confidence.

Thirteen years have passed since the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was opened for signature. Since then, most Member States have signed and ratified the Treaty, although nine Annex 2 countries have yet to ratify it before the Treaty can enter into force. In view of this situation, it is essential to continue making greater bilateral and multilateral efforts to call on those States which have not yet done so, especially Annex 2 States, to promptly sign or ratify the Treaty, as appropriate. In the meantime, those countries should show concrete signs of political will by committing themselves to a moratorium on nuclear tests. We eagerly await the speedy fulfilment of the United States Government's commitment to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Conventional weapons are another particularly important issue on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission and, in this respect, allow me to refer in particular to the theme of small arms and light weapons. For my country, as for most developing countries, this is a high priority issue for the safety of our citizens. This is not only because we deplore the harmful effects of the illicit traffic in small arms itself and its links with drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and gangs, but even more so because of its severe effects on economic development and social peace in general, which are an issue of great concern.

I note that most of the delegations that spoke before me clearly indicated their full awareness of the imperative need to combine our efforts and will to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The Security Council itself has given particular importance to this topic, and its members have expressly recognized that the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has today become a decisive element in the exacerbation of military conflicts, armed violence and severe violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. These views are also shared and have been expanded by specialized agencies of the United Nations system. These include the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, which has indicated that the effects of this scourge against the rule of law, democracy and economic and social development are frequently worrying.

In this context, we believe it is imperative that the issue of the illicit traffic of small arms light weapons be considered as a priority on the agenda of the Commission and be included in the negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group towards an Arms Trade Treaty as a response to the wishes of most delegations present here.

To conclude, allow me to reaffirm the firm commitment and support of the Government of El Salvador to initiatives aimed at strengthening the efforts of the majority of the countries of the international community to achieve a safer, more peaceful world for the benefit of our peoples.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who is unable to be present at this meeting.

On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Zinsou on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this session. I sincerely wish him every success. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As usual, nuclear disarmament is the highest priority in the field of disarmament. While there are nuclear weapons in the world, humankind will never be free of the danger of nuclear war. Had nuclear weapons not been developed, there would be no concern about their proliferation.

As we are all aware, the United States was the world's first country to develop and use nuclear weapons. Several countries have opted to take the path towards becoming nuclear-weapon States since the United States first manufactured and used nuclear weapons in actual warfare without hesitation. Their number has now increased to nine. That undeniable fact proves that the ringleader of nuclear proliferation is none other than the United States.

Even today, the United States is stepping up its modernization of nuclear weapons. That, in turn, has led to a nuclear arms race among nuclear Powers. Although the United States is advocating a nuclear-weapon-free world, its ambition to monopolize nuclear weapons shows no sign of changing, as manifested by its adoption of what is called an extended deterrence policy.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has played no role in either nuclear disarmament or the elimination of nuclear threats. Non-nuclear-weapon States placed high expectations on the NPT at the time of its conclusion. If anything, the NPT put in place and justified the current exclusive status of nuclear Powers. More than 40 years of the process of implementing the NPT illustrate beyond doubt that the Treaty is extremely discriminatory and unfair, and thus deceptive not only in terms of its substance but also in the light of its application so far.

The ceaseless efforts of developing countries to achieve the ultimate goal of the comprehensive and complete dismantlement of nuclear weapons are based on their firm belief that this is the only way to fundamentally resolve the issue of nuclear proliferation and to save humankind from the danger of nuclear war. The nuclear Powers, including the United States, should not seek a monopoly over nuclear weapons. Rather, they should embark on dismantling them without further delay as demanded unanimously by international society, including non-aligned countries. They should also demonstrate a modicum of will for nuclear disarmament by withdrawing nuclear threats and providing negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States at the earliest possible date.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is an inevitable outcome of the hostile policy of the United States, which has continued for more than half a century. The United States began to blackmail the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons at the time of the Korean War, between 1950 and 1953. In 1957, the United States introduced nuclear weapons into South Korea, thereby seriously endangering the sovereignty and right to existence of my country. Beginning in the early 2000s, it attempted to eliminate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by designating it as part of an axis of evil and a target of nuclear pre-emptive strikes.

Last year, the United States began to incite an international campaign for sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by labelling our satellite launch as a threat to international peace. Our satellite launch was in full conformity with all procedures and requirements of international law. This month, the

United States maximized its nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by conducting test nuclear-war manoeuvres, such as the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises with South Korean forces.

Likewise, the United States is leaving no means untried to bring down the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through military threats, economic sanctions and ideological and cultural poisoning. That fact indicates that, although there was regime change in the United States, there has been no change in its Administration's hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to bring down by force the ideology and system chosen by our people. Any country would do the same as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if its supreme interests were constantly threatened.

Denuclearizing the Korean peninsula is the goal of the policy pursued invariably by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As part of our sincere efforts to bring back on track the current deadlocked process of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed to the parties concerned an early start of the talks for replacing the armistice agreement with a peace treaty this year, which marks 60 years since the outbreak of the Korean War.

The course of the Six-Party Talks for denuclearizing the peninsula has experienced repeated frustrations and failures because of the absence of confidence among the parties concerned. No issue can ever be settled without confidence. Even friendly countries sometimes find it difficult to resolve a problem for lack of confidence between them. How much more can we then say about the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, given that we have now been in a state of war in which our countries have levelled guns at each other for more than 60 years?

It would be nonsensical for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sit at the negotiating table with those countries that violate its sovereignty and allow it to be repeatedly encroached upon, and to discuss with them the deterrent it built to defend its own sovereignty. There is no precedent, in the absence of confidence between them, for one belligerent party to put down its guns before the other does so. The minimum confidence measure required for denuclearizing the Korean peninsula is the conclusion of a peace treaty.

The fact that one party took issue even with a satellite launch for peaceful purposes occurred because there was no confidence among the parties concerned. The extreme encroachment upon the sovereignty of a country represented by the discriminatory objection to a satellite launch compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take the self-defensive countermeasure of conducting a nuclear test. The resulting sanctions have caused such a vicious cycle of distrust as to bring the Six-Party Talks to collapse. It is the purport of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proposal for concluding a peace treaty to put an end to such vicious cycles of distrust and build confidence to push forward denuclearization.

The conclusion of a peace treaty is the only realistic way to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. If a peace treaty is concluded, nuclear and war threats are removed and the vision of the United States President for a nuclear-weapon-free world is realized, we will not need even a single nuclear weapon. If the United States pursues dialogue and sanctions in parallel, we will counter with dialogue and the strengthening of our deterrent. We hope that the United States will accept our realistic proposal, thus bringing about the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, it is my pleasure to extend to Ambassador Zinsou our sincere congratulations on the trust reflected in his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2010 session. We trust that his chairmanship will be a success. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Rapporteur for the current session. The Arab Group also fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In recent decades, there has been mounting concern in the international community about the growing dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Selective and unfair policies to address this issue have led to the stockpiling of appalling arsenals and to the development of new lethal weapons in more than one country without regard for the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT). In spite of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, what we see in reality is a reflection of the shortcomings of the Treaty in the area of nuclear disarmament. We have also witnessed the pursuit of double standards in various areas of nuclear non-proliferation, as well as efforts by some Powers to restrict the inherent right of non-nuclear-weapon States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to use it for development and scientific progress.

In addition to the incomplete implementation of the provisions of the Treaty to date, the Arab Group is particularly concerned about the failure by Israel and other Member States, including the three depositary States that sponsored the resolution, to heed and implement the resolution on the Middle East.

The Arab Group welcomes the recent positive statements made by a number of nuclear-weapon State leaders in which they expressed their intention to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and to revitalize international efforts aimed at moving from nuclear non-proliferation to nuclear disarmament. Our Group looks forward to these statements being translated into real action in the form of resolutions and deeds that transform the nuclear disarmament process and achieve credibility for the non-proliferation system and for the universality of the NPT in order to realize regional and international security. The recent announcement of an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation aimed at mutual reductions in their nuclear arsenals is perhaps a step forward towards serious international comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

Despite that, some nuclear-weapon States do not take their commitments to nuclear non-proliferation seriously in terms of achieving nuclear disarmament. In fact, they violate their international commitments and flout their pledges to non-nuclear-weapon States. The most glaring evidence of such violations is the continued cooperation of some nuclear-weapon countries with Israel in the nuclear field. More serious is the fact that some States parties to the NPT give exemptions to States that are not parties to the Treaty without the legal authority to take such unilateral decisions, which contravene their Treaty obligations, the resolutions adopted at the review conferences and the indefinite extension of the NPT.

The failure of some international parties to follow up on the implementation of the decisions and outcomes of previous NPT review conferences and the distinctions they make among their commitments seriously jeopardize the credibility of the NPT. Here, we would cite in particular the Middle East resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. We reiterate that the indefinite extension of the NPT regime would not have been achieved by consensus without that resolution, which provided for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the Middle East — the only region of the world that has seen no serious international effort to make it a nuclear-weapon-free zone — continues to be the flagrant case that proves the inefficiency of the NPT in achieving security for its State parties. That encourages Israel to acquire military nuclear capabilities outside any international supervisory system.

In this regard, we would caution against the dangers of international silence on the Israeli nuclear position. Israel has shifted from a policy of ambiguity on the nuclear issue to one of making public statements on its possession of nuclear weapons. These statements have been met by a strange silence on the part of the international community that reflects passive acceptance of this anomalous situation, which has made the peoples of the region lose faith in the concept of nuclear non-proliferation.

These events have revitalized the possibility of a nuclear arms race despite the series of consensual General Assembly resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that stress the dangers of Israel possessing nuclear weapons. This has also happened despite the fact that, on 29 December 2003, the Arab Group submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council on making the region free of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, that draft resolution has yet to be adopted or implemented.

The Arab Group supports moving actively towards the implementation of the 13 steps proposed at the Review Conference in 2000 and the commitment to reducing nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible manner within a multilateral international framework, while stressing the need for a legally binding formula to ensure the safety of non-nuclear-

weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Our Group would also like to stress that the right of States to acquire nuclear technology and to use it for peaceful purposes is an inalienable right under article IV of the NPT.

The only way to achieve the universality of the NPT and to avert the dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation is if all Member States accede to the Treaty and implement article III, which calls on States parties to reach comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

All countries of the Middle East have acceded to the NPT except for Israel, the only State in the region that has nuclear military capabilities. It is essential that the international community recognize the anxiety of the peoples of the region regarding Israel's nuclear military capabilities. Those capabilities have been cited in the reports of relevant international forums, including Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 487 (1981), which expressly calls on Israel to subject all its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime and invites the IAEA to stop its scientific assistance to Israel. The most recent resolutions in this regard are General Assembly resolutions 64/26 and 64/66, which reiterated the importance of the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA in order to achieve the universality of the Treaty.

Here I would like to highlight the Doha declaration adopted by Arab leaders on 30 March 2009 and the Sirte summit declaration adopted at the Arab summit on 28 March, in line with Security Council resolution 487 (1981). The declarations state explicitly that the international community is called upon to make the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to compel Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the IAEA safeguards regime.

Currently, the international community is preparing to declare a fourth disarmament decade, during which we would like to build on the achievements of past decades and make progress on those initiatives that have already been undertaken. We believe that the agreed elements of the fourth decade must reflect the ongoing priority of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international efforts to achieve arms reductions, disarmament and non-proliferation in a universal, balanced and non-discriminatory manner.

The Arab Group would like to stress that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as those established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Central Asia, in addition to the status of Mongolia as a nuclear-weapon-free State, are all positive and important steps to bolster nuclear disarmament and its non-proliferation at the global level.

In this context, the Arab Group welcomes the second Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, scheduled to be held in New York on 30 April 2010. It should be recalled that the resolution on the Middle East was part of a package agreed upon at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Furthermore, there is a close link between the indefinite extension of the NPT, on the one hand, and the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, on the other.

In this regard, the Arab Group welcomes the support voiced by the international community and the importance it has attached to the adoption, at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, of practical measures aimed at the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. While we welcome the measures that have been and will be proposed by a number of countries, we note that all such steps must be closely tied to the NPT framework and avoid linking other subjects or frameworks with the Treaty, because that would cause rather than rectify an imbalance in nuclear commitments.

With regard to the agenda item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", the Arab Group emphasizes the need to adopt effective measures that contribute to international peace and security while giving due consideration to the sovereignty of States, their rights to self-defence and to non-interference in their internal affairs, and the need to consider the particular security and defence needs of each region. The Arab Group asserts that confidence-building measures cannot be a substitute for or precondition of disarmament, despite their relevance to the creation of a climate conducive to disarmament and arms monitoring, so long as they

are adopted in a balanced and inc'usive manner in various regions of the world.

Our Group also supports all unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures to reduce military expenditure. Such measures contribute to regional and international peace and security.

The most important criterion for the credibility of practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons lies in the just resolution of military conflicts unencumbered by the hidden agendas of some influential countries that export conventional weapons. The situation in the Middle East is the most important example in this regard. The Israeli occupation of Arab territories is supported directly by some major countries that export conventional weapons. In fact, some of these countries are involved in joint ventures with the Israeli military industry to develop and export such weapons technology to foreign markets. This encourages Israel not to accept the hand of peace extended to it by the Arab Group and to continue its occupation of Arab territories, its daily violations of international humanitarian law and the escalation of tension in the region.

Finally, the Arab Group calls for full compliance with and the optimum implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Full international support for and compliance with this instrument is important for the success of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to be held in July 2010, which will optimally bolster the Programme at both the regional and the international levels.

Ms. Mourabit (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to convey to Ambassador Zinsou the sincere congratulations of my delegation upon Benin's assumption of the chairmanship of this important deliberative body, the Disarmament Commission. Benin — a friendly and brotherly African country — may rest assured, as should the members of the Bureau, of the full support of my delegation.

I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome the participation in the work of the Disarmament Commission of High Representative Sergio Duarte and, through him, to thank the entire Office for Disarmament Affairs team for their praiseworthy work throughout the year in following up on and managing disarmament issues.

Before setting out the areas my delegation will address in this statement, I should like to associate myself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf by the Non-Aligned Movement; of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group; and of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group.

The Disarmament Commission is meeting once again with a feeling of uncertainty, despite the glimmer of hope inspired last year by the statements made by certain nuclear States favouring progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Without a doubt, there is an acute need to move beyond the legacy of a difficult international situation that had negative effects on the United Nations disarmament machinery, which was at a standstill for several years.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco, which has signed and ratified all the multilateral instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), remains committed to the strengthening of that fundamental instrument, which aims at nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and guarantees the right of its States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Morocco also welcomes the decision taken by the United States of America and Russia with a view to their pending signature of a new START agreement on the reduction of the number of their nuclear warheads. This agreement will constitute a historic step for the realization of general and complete nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, while we appreciate the importance of the bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements on disarmament, Morocco calls on this Commission to proceed with multilateral negotiations, as envisioned in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

As co-Chair with France of the sixth annual Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on 24 and 25 September last year, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to that Treaty, which is a fundamental instrument of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

With the uncertainty prevailing in our world today, dominated by the growing threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including those of nuclear terrorism, the entry into force of the CTBT is now more than ever a matter of urgency and a priority for the international community. The Kingdom of Morocco thus takes this opportunity to call on all countries that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty in order to ensure its universality. We also urge annex 2 countries to ratify it as soon as possible so as to enable the Treaty finally to enter into force and realize its objectives.

While it encourages unilateral and bilateral initiatives aimed at the reduction of nuclear arsenals, Morocco remains convinced of the importance of strengthening the multilateral approach to general and complete nuclear disarmament as the only way of protecting ourselves against the danger that these weapons represent, be it through their use, failure to secure them or their acquisition by non-State actors and by terrorists.

Morocco calls for respect for article VI of the NPT and urges States to reflect seriously on the merits of concluding an international convention for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and, to that end, to create immediately within the Conference on Disarmament a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation would also like to address the other important item on our agenda, namely the item on the draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. While we are entering the fourth disarmament decade this year, we cannot do so without taking a look at what our predecessors achieved during previous Decades.

I am referring to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, of 1978, whose Final Document (resolution S-10/2) included important recommendations for general and complete disarmament. I refer also to the Decade of the 1980s, which focused on ending the arms race and enshrining the concept of the indivisibility of peace and development, and to the third Decade, the 1990s, when confidence-building measures, dialogue and negotiation were recognized as a means to achieve the objectives of disarmament. To its credit, that Decade saw the conclusion of the CTBT as a significant instrument for implementing a systematic process leading to nuclear disarmament and reaffirmed the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT to the civilian use of nuclear energy within the framework of the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Kingdom of Morocco would therefore like to see in the elements of the draft declaration of a fourth disarmament decade substantive recommendations in the areas of both nuclear disarmament and conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons.

Morocco devotes particular attention to the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. It considers that the issue of conventional weapons, in particular the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, is a leading challenge and is a threat, indeed an obstacle, to reform and development efforts, especially on our African continent.

The absence of regulations and monitoring of the use, transfer and stockpiling of these weapons contributes to their uncontrolled proliferation in hot spots of tension which leads to unsustainable consequences for the stability and security of States as well as for their socio-economic and human development.

Aside from the important efforts made at the national level which have now enabled it to exercise a high degree of control over the management of these weapons, the Kingdom of Morocco is very much involved in the international community's efforts in this area. My country has a great interest in ensuring that this session of the Disarmament Commission will yield the broadest consensus possible on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

As I come to the end of my statement, my delegation would like to express its hope that over the coming three weeks we will all be able to rise to the challenge and agree on recommendations concerning decisions necessary for strengthening the multilateral disarmament system.

Mrs. Ancidey (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement by congratulating Ambassador Zinsou on his election as Chair of the Commission for its 2010 substantive session. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group.

The opening of the work of the Disarmament Commission is once again framed within a process where great expectations for nuclear disarmament are being harboured but are not becoming reality. We are still awaiting realization of the announcements made in 2009.

The latest events on the disarmament agenda only reaffirm once again that dealing with this issue is without any doubt a question of political will. For this reason, today more than ever, the Disarmament Commission, the deliberative body of the disarmament machinery, is a fundamental space in which to exchange opinions and positions on nuclear disarmament with a view to formulating recommendations to the General Assembly. Nevertheless, we note with concern that for some years the Commission has not been able to attain concrete results.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates once again its commitment to reaching a world free of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, we recognize that that is the direct path towards ensuring that humankind does not live under threat, shadowed by the possible use of such weapons. General and complete nuclear disarmament is an objective intrinsically linked to the building of a world where peace reigns.

Venezuela is convinced that international efforts in the area of general and complete disarmament must take place at the same time as realizing the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation, both horizontal and vertical. This is an interdependent process which will not make progress until the nuclear Powers, first and foremost, adopt concrete actions and comply with the commitments they have made.

After the fifth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), at which an indefinite extension of the Treaty was agreed upon, we harboured the hope that States parties would work together to make progress in the area of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

This feeling became stronger after the sixth Conference, at which the implementation of practical steps for disarmament was agreed upon. Unfortunately, these objectives were frustrated due to the lack of political will of some nuclear Powers which avoid honouring their international commitments. This situation has negatively affected the climate of dialogue, understanding and confidence which should reign in multilateral forums charged with negotiating multilateral disarmament agreements and measures.

My delegation calls once again upon nuclear-weapon States to comply with the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, more specifically with those of article VI. At the same time, we reject the selective application of that instrument. Respect for and compliance with the three pillars of the Treaty are indispensable for attaining the balance necessary for strengthening the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Venezuela reaffirms its concern at the strategic defence doctrines which nuclear Powers now consider to be indispensable for the promotion and development of military alliances and in military deterrence policies. Given to such provisions, we wonder how the international community can develop confidence-building measures for disarmament and non-proliferation if we are bogged down in processes marked by deep mistrust exacerbated by these doctrines.

The next NPT Review Conferences represents an opportunity to reach concrete results that will benefit humanity in general and not just a select group. We sorely need to agree upon a universal and legally binding international instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States such as my own. We should also urgently deal with a set of measures to take concrete agreed actions to fully eliminate nuclear weapons within a specific time frame.

Venezuela believes that agreeing on a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade will have a very positive influence on ongoing international efforts to meet the challenges in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we know that it will become an effective tool to ensure a safer life for the peoples we represent here.

My delegation is at the Chairman's disposal for the full success of his work and that of the Commission.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation wishes to congratulate Mr. Zinsou on his assumption of

the position as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and to assure him of South Africa's full support. We associate ourselves with the statements delivered by our colleagues from Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Multilateralism, with the United Nations and its Charter at the centre, remains central to any effort to find sustainable solutions to the challenges to international peace and security. South Africa therefore continues to attach great value to the work of the Disarmament Commission, with its mandate as the sole deliberative body of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Regarding the first substantive agenda item, the Commission's work takes place in an international environment that is marked by both important new developments and enduring challenges in the areas of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. South Africa remains guided by the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, informed by the principle that the only credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons is their total elimination.

South Africa attaches great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. South Africa stresses the importance of the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and hopes for a forward-looking outcome that advances all three pillars of the Treaty in a balanced manner without losing the gains of the past. With the review coming 40 years after the entry into force of the Treaty and 20 years after the end of the cold war, it will be important to leave the next Review Conference with a common agreement on advancing the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

South Africa is of the view that the established instruments in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament can effectively address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Universal adherence to, full implementation of and compliance with these international instruments, along with the complete and early elimination of these weapons, will guarantee that they will never be used.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a pressing goal and a non-negotiable commitment, and South Africa will work with all concerned to achieve the earliest entry into force of this important element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

South Africa welcomes the positive developments in the Conference on Disarmament that led to the consensus adoption of a programme of work, but it is disappointed that the Conference could not agree on the modalities for the implementation of the decision. We call upon all Conference members to ensure an early start to substantive work in the Conference. Negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty may, we hope, soon be a reality. We trust that the deliberations in Working Group I will contribute to consensus in this important area under the leadership of its very capable Chair.

Security remains one of the most fundamental aspirations of humankind. The United Nations Charter is in fact premised on the notion of collective security with the right to self-defence explicitly enshrined. History has shown that the traditional approach of seeking security through the acquisition of the most advanced weapons and the build-up of huge armies has led to numerous devastating wars, including two devastating world wars.

The excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, beyond legitimate self-defence purposes, has the potential to create or perpetuate the vicious cycle of instability and conflict, on the one hand, and poverty and underdevelopment on the other. Confidence-building measures could play an important role in preventing or addressing this downward spiral.

South Africa looks forward to the fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. South Africa had the honour, together with Colombia and Japan, to introduce the omnibus small arms resolution in the General Assembly in 2009 which, we believe, establishes a forward-looking programme of work through 2012. South Africa believes that there is still room for improved cooperation on the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as on illicit brokering.

South Africa will continue to work with Member States towards the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty to be held in 2012 in order to consider the important questions and modalities that remain to be resolved, including the details of the most appropriate regulatory framework to be adopted. Any further delay in regulating conventional arms transfers will continue to undermine efforts to address human rights abuses, the displacement of the innocent and oppression, and will undermine development goals.

South Africa continues to attach great importance to the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, both of which are aimed at addressing the human suffering inflicted by these indiscriminate weapons on civilian populations.

South Africa finally welcomes the inclusion of the item "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade" on the Commission's substantive agenda. This item will allow us to collectively develop that broader vision of a common purpose, which has been lacking in recent times and which would allow us to consolidate the positive developments while addressing the substantial challenges in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to congratulate the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election to conduct the work of the Disarmament Commission for this session. We wish them success in their tasks and assure them of our support.

Allow me at the outset to associate myself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States and Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States, as well as that delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reaffirms its commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We are ready to make every effort to achieve total disarmament and are firmly committed to the objectives of the Disarmament Commission. We recognize the Commission's central role in conducting constructive deliberations that lead to resolutions and recommendations that will contribute to strengthening the efforts of the disarmament machinery.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which are a top priority for the peace and security of humankind and its future, Libya affirms the need to achieve balance in the implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which are nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology. These issues must be addressed in a non-discriminatory manner in order to preserve the efficiency and credibility of the Treaty.

We believe in emphasizing nuclear non-proliferation, especially horizontal non-proliferation, and that downplaying the importance of nuclear disarmament or restricting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology would cause great alarm and cast doubt on the credibility of the Treaty and its implementation in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner, especially in view of the presence of nuclear arsenals that threaten the presence of human life on the entire planet.

Libya, which voluntarily renounced its weapons of mass destruction programme and equipment in 2003, emphasizes the fact that the NPT remains key to realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We also stress that it has now become more urgent than ever for nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments and undertake the necessary practical measures to dismantle their nuclear weapons in accordance with the provisions of article VI of the NPT. They must also commit themselves to implementing the outcomes of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 13 practical steps that were adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, and comply with the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

The credibility of the NPT can be consolidated only through the commitment of all parties, especially nuclear-weapon States, to honouring all of its articles. We acknowledge the momentum that resulted from the remarks of some of the leading nuclear Powers last year, in which they declared their commitment to working to realize the objective towards which we are all striving — the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons. We note in particular the declaration by President Obama of the United States of America and President Medvedev of the Russian Federation of their intention to conclude a legally binding and verifiable agreement to replace the START Treaty. We are, however, still awaiting the translation of those

declarations into practical, tangible measures and results that would make a difference to reducing nuclear arsenals in an internationally verifiable and transparent manner.

Political will and genuine resolve are essential if we are to fully eradicate all nuclear weapons, which would be the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. We must therefore strengthen efforts to realize the universality of the NPT through the adherence of all countries and their total commitment to all its provisions. All States must also seek to apply the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards regime to all nuclear activities and installations in a non-discriminatory fashion. It is our hope that the Disarmament Commission will take the appropriate and objective measures required in this respect.

As we approach the NPT Review Conference, it is our hope that we will have constructive deliberations and that adopt concrete and decisive measures. It is our view that the Conference will be a genuine opportunity to put the commitment of nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States to the test, and for them to prove their credibility and seriousness with regard to their declared initiatives aimed at attaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

Libya is of the view that the time has come for us to start working to strengthen the commitments emanating from the NPT by enhancing the text of the Treaty itself. Libya has therefore prepared and submitted to the Secretariat prior to the Review Conference a working paper that includes proposed amendments to the text of the Treaty with the aim of securing guarantees from nuclear States that they will work towards complete nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international supervision and verification. We have addressed letters to the depository States of the NPT requesting that they call a meeting of the States parties to the Treaty to consider the amendments that we have proposed to article VI of the Treaty. It is our hope that the depository States will circulate this request to all the parties to the Treaty and that the proposals will receive positive consideration within the context of constructive dialogue aimed at securing optimum and balanced implementation of the NPT.

In addition, Libya is of the view that we should also work urgently to conclude a legally binding and unconditional international instrument to guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such guarantees would no doubt enhance the implementation of the NPT.

We support and encourage all efforts and treaties related to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world. We welcome the recent developments and entry into force of the Treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and Central Asia. We have no doubt that the approach of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones will strengthen the universality of the NPT and contribute to the realization of international peace and security.

Regrettably, the matter of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East remains at a standstill, with no tangible steps to implement such a zone as a result of Israeli intransigence and the lack of necessary international measures in this respect. This in turn is cause for great concern among the States and peoples of the region. Here it may be useful to recall that the agreement on the indefinite extension of the NPT could not have been achieved by consensus without the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East in 1995. That resolution called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, the Middle East remains the only region that has seen no real international effort to rid it of nuclear weapons, which encourages the Israeli entity to continue acquiring military nuclear capabilities outside all international supervision. It is also a cause of concern that there is continued cooperation in the nuclear field between some nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT and the Israeli entity, which reflects a grave imbalance in the implementation of the commitments of the Treaty by those States, the decisions of the review conferences and the provisions of the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Therefore, it is imperative that the international community exert without delay the necessary pressure on the Israeli entity to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party and to subject its facilities and activities to the supervision of the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These steps are necessary to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

With regard to the agenda item on a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, we wish to emphasize that the elements of the declaration must be based on the progress achieved in previous decades and that they should take into consideration the important steps to be taken in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. This applies to conventional weapons as well.

Libya emphasizes the importance of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The confidence-building measures should be balanced and take into consideration the specific security and defence characteristics and realities of every region. We must respect the recognized principles of the rights of Member States to acquire weapons for self-defence and to resist foreign occupation, the sovereignty of Member States and non-interference in their internal affairs. These are basic, crucial issues, especially given the situation in the Middle East, which has endured the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories for several decades, despite all the concessions and peace initiatives offered by the Arab side.

The situation in the Middle East highlights the fact that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons cannot be implemented in a practical manner unless the Palestinian people are able to enjoy their inalienable rights and obtain a just and comprehensive solution, especially in view of the support that the Israeli entity receives from some weapons-producing countries.

Libya emphasizes the importance of commitment to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and it is our hope that we will continue building on progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that multilateral cooperation and serious political will are two critical elements in continuing forward and effectively realizing the objectives of disarmament. It is incumbent on all of us to work together, learn from the lessons of the past and benefit from the rapid developments in the international arena in order to realize a world that is safe and prosperous for future generation.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Given the recent encouraging developments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, this session's work, after many frustrating years, will be critical to achieving our disarmament agenda. This is because the political will necessary to making a difference is increasing in major capitals.

The resumption of the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, after many years of stalemate, is surely a welcome development. We are also encouraged by the pronouncements emanating from different capitals on their promises to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda in a substantial manner. As the President of the first session of 2010, Bangladesh tried its best to bring all parties together. The outcome of the first session was appreciated by all of the member countries.

Bangladesh has never had any doubt that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Security Council has just reconfirmed that. Bangladesh reiterates its call, as reflected also in Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), that States that are not parties to the NPT should accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States so as to achieve its universality at an early date, and, pending their accession to the Treaty, to adhere to its terms.

Bangladesh calls for the adoption of a balanced approach in addressing the three pillars of the NPT: nuclear disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons, non-proliferation to countries not yet in possession, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all. Bangladesh also reiterates its call on all States, particularly the remaining annex 2 nations, to refrain from conducting nuclear test explosions and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Bangladesh was the first annexed South Asian nation to join the CTBT. We are convinced that the universalization and entry into force of the CTBT at an early date are critical building blocks of a nuclear-free world.

Bangladesh also calls upon the parties to the NPT, pursuant to article VI of the Treaty, to undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear arms reduction and disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control; it also calls on all other States to join in this endeavour. We look forward to the NPT Review Conference of 2010 for a balanced outcome in all of the Treaty's three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh supports the Secretary-General's five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament. Based on the Inter-Parliamentary Union resolution adopted in April 2009, the Parliament of Bangladesh is going to pass a resolution supporting nuclear and general disarmament.

Bangladesh, a country constitutionally committed to peace and to general and complete disarmament, enjoys an impeccable record in disarmament and non-proliferation, in nuclear as well as in conventional weapons. We are party to almost all United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. Within our limited resources, we endeavour to ensure their full implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

We would like to emphasize here that, while we support all non-discriminatory efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Bangladesh recognizes the inalienable right, as stipulated article IV of NPT, of the parties to the Treaty to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of that Treaty. For example, Bangladesh has consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. However, under the guidance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we are currently working to make good use of the NPT provision on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to improve the living standards of our people. As part of our commitment to non-proliferation, Bangladesh has also concluded a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, including an Additional Protocol.

While we must continue to work to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the face of planet Earth, we must not lose sight of the perennial threats posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Bangladesh lends its support to the global effort to conclude an arms trade treaty to ensure the transparent transfer of conventional weapons.

Bangladesh also calls for putting an end to the use of anti-personnel landmines. Many civilians, including children and women, have fallen victim to landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations. Bangladesh has fulfilled its obligations under the Landmine Convention by destroying its own stockpile. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Ottawa Convention. Assistance should also be extended to mine clearing operations, as well as for the rehabilitation of victims in affected countries.

We have good reason to be more hopeful than ever about making progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, as well as about the NPT Review Conference to be held in May of this year. This can indeed be a time to look beyond what had been perceived to be achievable all these years and to work for an ambitious disarmament agenda to make the planet a safer place for all of us and for future generations.

The Acting Chairman: We have now exhausted the list of speakers. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes, and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Park Chul-min (Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply to make some clarifications regarding the false allegation made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in his general statement.

The Chairman took the Chair.

With regard to the military exercises mentioned by that representative, I would like to clarify that those exercises were our annual joint military exercises, which are purely defensive in nature. The remarks by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are groundless. My delegation believes there would be no merit in repeating the established facts.

With respect to the peace treaty, all issues concerning the Korean peninsula should be discussed thoroughly by the core parties, including the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to recall that the Joint Statement of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks, issued in September 2005, clearly articulates that principle. My delegation would like to remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the expeditious denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the key to creating an environment in which to discuss a peace regime.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): With regard to the statement just made by the South Korean representative, we think it has no value and is not worthy of consideration. The South Korean Government is used to claiming that their joint military exercises against its compatriots are always defensive. If they are really defensive in nature, what are they defending against? My country is a small and peace-loving country. No country would believe that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would attack South Korea, which is solely supported by the super-Power, which is the United States. The military exercises are actually aimed at other countries. That is part of the United States strategy in North-East Asia.

With regard to a peacekeeping treaty, yes we have proposed to the parties concerned the conclusion of such a treaty. We agree that this treaty should be discussed among the parties concerned. The main purpose of this proposal is to build confidence among the parties concerned, in particular between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The peace treaty would replace the Armistice Agreement that was signed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China and the United States — at that time on behalf of the United Nations. At the time of the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement, South Korea was strongly against that conclusion. I have a lot of things to say with regard to this treaty but, because of time constraints, I shall not elaborate further.

Instead, I should like to return to the statement made by the South Korean representative this morning. In his statement, our South Korean colleague said that he wanted to highlight the importance of an early resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue. From our perspective, our possession of nuclear weapons is not the issue. If our possession of nuclear weapons becomes an issue, what about the nuclear weapons possessed by other countries? What becomes the issue is the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. And the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula does not at all mean the unilateral abandonment of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should cover first of all the withdrawal of nuclear weapons of the United States from South Korea. Secondly, it should cover the issue of withdrawing the United States nuclear umbrella over South Korea. Denuclearization should also cover the total elimination of nuclear threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Apart from those issues, there are a lot of other issues to be covered: it is a long list. The list is too long to remember.

In the statement, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was also urged to return promptly to the Six-Party Talks. The truth is that the Six-Party Talks have reached an impasse: they have collapsed. The Six-Party Talks were made to collapse by those countries that are currently calling for their early resumption; South Korea is one of them. The United States, Japan and South Korea forced the Security Council to adopt a sanctions resolution against my country, simply because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a satellite.

They say that our satellite launch was a missile launch that constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Now, the question arises: if our satellite launch is a threat to international peace and security, what about the other satellite launches? Do they not pose a threat to international peace and security? I want my South Korean colleague to answer that question.

He also mentioned that we have to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and implement the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement. First of all, I reiterate my Government's position totally rejecting those Security Council resolutions. These Security Council's resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are in contravention of the United Nations Charter and international law. We launched a satellite in full conformity with the requirements of international law. Security Council resolutions cannot supersede international law or the United Nations Charter. They are not legally binding at all, at least

vis-à-vis the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As to the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, we have fully implemented all our obligations under the Statement. But the other countries have failed to implement their respective obligations.

The representative of South Korea also mentioned the so-called grand bargain initiative. First of all, I am not aware of that initiative. I do not understand what it really means. I am not a good businessman. I am from a socialist system. We people from socialist countries are not as good at bargaining as the South Korean people, who are capitalists. Our nuclear weapon is not a bargaining chip; it is the inevitable outcome of United States hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, if the United States abandons and puts an end to its existing hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the nuclear issue would be resolved smoothly. We have to keep these nuclear weapons as long as the United States continues its nuclear policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): There are no other requests for the floor. We have thus exhausted the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting. I would like to thank all delegations who participated in the general exchange of views, which was very productive. I should now like to make some closing remarks to summarize the work we have done over the past two days.

We have now come to the end of the general exchange of views, during which delegations have unambiguously expressed their concerns, expectations and priorities for this session of the Disarmament Commission and for the current three-year cycle. I noted in particular the great satisfaction of delegations with regard to the finalization of the agreement on reducing weapon stockpiles that was negotiated between the United States and the Russian Federation. That agreement, whose signing has been announced for 8 April, marks a decisive turning point and a clear break with the paralysis that has characterized the disarmament track in the course of the past decade. It injects dynamism into the thaw that has been taking place with regard to peace and security issues for several months.

Members also highlighted the importance of deadlines on the disarmament timetable and the need to complete the work of this session to set the negotiations that are to take place on a promising course. In particular, members underscored their hope that the Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will strengthen the Treaty's three pillars. Likewise, the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit also drew members' attention, as did the fourth Biennial Meeting on Small Arms.

I also noted a desire for the changes that have arisen in language and discussion to become real actions that will ensure equal security for all. Members called for pursuing efforts in the area of reducing nuclear stockpiles, as well as for a cessation of the proliferation of those weapons in all its forms.

Many delegations also called for negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. They also reiterated the need to bring about the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to conclude a cut-off treaty on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and a convention on the elimination of nuclear weapons, in order to realize our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons. Members also reiterated their support for, and commitment to, nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Delegations emphasized the need to make progress on the ground with regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, without which it would be difficult to ensure the regional peace and stability that are necessary for progress on disarmament issues.

Many delegations emphasized the need to find ways to reduce military spending in order to free up further resources for development.

I shall not recount here all the essential points of view expressed by member States during the 40-odd statements made before the Commission. I have just given a brief summary of the general exchange of reviews, which yielded a wealth of ideas that will be of benefit to the documents currently being drafted in the two Working Groups. Many delegations expressed a desire that the Commission should take advantage of the time allotted to it to make progress in addressing the items assigned to the Commission's two Working Groups.

Members encouraged me, as Chairman, to spare no effort to ensure that we maximize the chances for

the success of the current three-year cycle. They asked that all parties concerned demonstrate the political will necessary to achieve that goal. I urge every delegation to participate in the deliberations in a constructive spirit, so that we may rise to the expectations of the international community. Those expectations have been expressed before us here in this room.

I now declare the general exchange of views closed.

Before I adjourn the meeting, I should like to invite all delegations to participate in the work of the Working Groups, which will begin tomorrow morning.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.